

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Beginning June 1, all U.S. citizens crossing the border into the United States from Western Hemisphere countries -- regardless of method of transportation -- will be required to show a passport or other qualified documentation.

This is a change from current rules that require a passport only from those traveling by air from Western Hemisphere nations. The changes are part of the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative, created as a result of recommendations made by the 9/11 Commission.

"Congress delayed the implementation of this rule once already when it became clear the State Department was overwhelmed with passport requests," said Congressman Sam Farr (D-Carmel). "It's my hope that State Department officials are prepared for the rapid increase in passport requests they will surely face in the next few weeks. This new rule is important for our border security, but it can't come at the expense of the public."

Accepted documents include a valid U.S. passport, passport card, or other travel document approved by the Department of Homeland Security. A full list of accepted documents and information on the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative is available here: http://travel.state.gov/v/travel/cbpmc/cbpmc_2223.html

The State Department says those applying for a passport should allow four to six weeks for new passports and renewals. Expedited service takes about two to three weeks. Individuals who have had problems securing a passport and are planning on traveling within a week can call Rep. Farr's office at 831-429-1976 for assistance.

Children under the age of 16 can provide the original or copy of their birth certificate or other proof of citizenship such as a naturalization certificate or citizenship card. Groups of children ages 16 through 18 traveling with a school or religious group, social organization or sports team may enter under adult supervision with originals or copies of their birth certificates or other proof of citizenship.

For more information on applying for a passport, visit this Web site: <http://travel.state.gov/pas>

[sport/passport_1738.html](#)

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